

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are now present in this application, with new claims 19-20 being added. Claims 1 and 19 are the sole remaining independent claims in connection with the present application.

Objection to the Title

The Examiner has objected to the title as not being descriptive. Accordingly, the title has been changed to --Contactor Arrangement With A Blocking Element--. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's objection is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 – 6 and 10 – 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Moriya, citing Figures 1a – 1d of Moriya. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Initially, Applicant notes that independent claim 1 has been amended, in a non-narrowing fashion, to clarify the distinctions between independent claim 1 and the Moriya reference. Applicant respectfully submits that Moriya fails to teach or suggest at least a contactor arrangement wherein the blocking element is deflected from an intermediate to a blocking position blocking operation of the other contactor, by a guide of an operated contactor upon one of the contactors being operated, the blocking position preventing operation of the unoperated contactor. At least such a limitation is not taught or suggested by Moriya. Further, new claim 19 has been added, wherein Moriya fails to teach or suggest at least the blocking means for, in a blocking position deflected from the intermediate position, blocking operation of the other

contactor upon one of the contactors being operated, the blocking position preventing operation of the unoperated other contactor.

In Figures 1a and 1d, Moriya shows a manual push-button switch assembly. The assembly includes two 3-stage push-button switches. An interlock plate 16 is pivotally provided such that whenever the push-button 20a or 20b is actuated, the plate is pivoted by being pushed by a moveable body 21a or 21b. Each of the moveable bodies includes a set of moveable contacts 18a – 18c, and on the bottom surface of the casing, one set of three fixed contacts 19a – 19c are provided so as to be opposed to the moveable contacts.

Figure 1a illustrates the push-button switch 20a and 20b, both not being depressed; Figure 1b illustrates the push-button switch 20a being depressed enough to make contact with the first fixed contact 19a; Figure 1c illustrates the push-button switch 20a being depressed enough to make contact with both the contacts 19a and 19b; and Figure 1d illustrates the push-button switch being pressed further, to its third state, to maintain contact with each of contacts 19a – 19c, wherein the interlock plate 16 has moved upon the push-button switch 20a being depressed in its third state.

Although some type of plate 16 is pivotally provided in the switch of Moriya, such a plate is clearly not a blocking element as claimed. The blocking element as set forth in claim 1, is one which, when deflected from its intermediate position to a blocking position, “blocks operation of the other contactor,” wherein “the blocking position prevents operation of the unoperated other contactor.” In Figures 1a – 1d of Moriya, although the plate 16 does pivot, it clearly does not block operation of the contactor 20b. The plate 16 merely rocks back and forth between switches 20a and 20b, but clearly does not block operation of switch 20b. With regard to Figures 1b and

1c, the plate 16 does not even appear to move when switch 20a is in either its first or second position, and thus switch 20b could easily be simultaneously activated or operated in one of the first and second positions. Thus, operation of this second switch is clearly not prevented.

As the plate 16 merely rocks back and forth, one could easily activate the second switch 20b after the first switch has been activated and thus, its operation is not “prevented” as claimed. At best, when switch 20b is depressed, operation is permitted and the plate 16 can thus move switch 20b into another position. There is nothing in Figures 1a – 1d which prevents operation of one of the two switches. At least sequential operation is permitted at any time by merely pressing the other switch.

Further, with regard to the remaining figures of Moriya, these figures also fail to teach or suggest at least a blocking element which blocks operation of another contactor as claimed. Somewhat similar to that shown in Figures 1a – 1d, the two manual switches 2a and 2b of Figure 2 for example, also include some type of interlock plate 7 which permits three states of operation of each switch. Columns 6 – 7 discuss how both push-button switches 2a and 2b can be depressed at a first, second, and third state. Further, as discussed in the paragraph bridging columns 9 and 10 and as shown in Figures 9a – 9f, each of the buttons may be depressed at the same time (see Figure 9c which shows the state with a left-side push-button 2b is depressed slightly and the right-side push-button 2a is pushed so that the moveable contact 18a is brought into contact with the fixed contact 19a). Thus, the interlock plate 7 clearly does not block operation of the other contactor, when the blocking prevents operation of the unoperated other contactor, as claimed in claim 1 for example. Since push-buttons 2a and 2b can be depressed together, the interlock plate 7 cannot be such a blocking element as claimed 1.

Further, even if buttons 2a and 2b could not be depressed together, the interlock plate 7 would merely operate to allow for sequential pushing of buttons 2a and 2b and would still act to block operation of the other contactor. For example, if switch 2a is depressed, switch 2b could thereafter be depressed such that the interlock plate 7 would merely shift to force button 2a in an upward direction as button 2b were pressed in downward direction. Thus, when switch 2a is activated, switch 2b is clearly not blocked, wherein operation of switch 2b is prevented. For at least somewhat similar reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Moriya fails to teach or suggest at least the blocking means as set forth in claim 19. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 19 is also patentable over Moriya.

Accordingly, for at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that each of claims 1 – 20, including new claims 19 and 20, as allowable over the Moriya patent. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.



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CONCLUSION

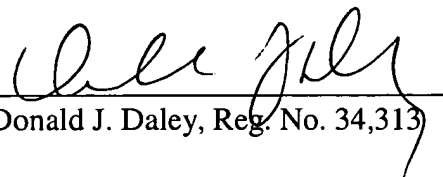
Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of all outstanding objections and rejections and allowance of each of claims 1-20 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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